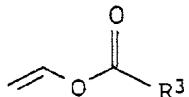
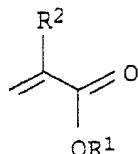


We claim:

1. A water-soluble or water-dispersible copolymer obtainable by
 5 free-radical polymerization of
 a) 80 to 20% by weight of hydroxy-C₁-C₆-alkyl (meth)acrylate
 and, where appropriate, one or more compounds of the
 formula (A) or (B)

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(A)

(B)

with R¹ = H, C₁-C₆-alkyl,

R² = H, CH₃

20 R³ = C₁-C₂₄-alkyl

or mixtures thereof

in the presence of

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b) 20 to 80% by weight of polyvinyl alcohol (PVA) and

c) where appropriate 0 to 20% by weight of other
 polymerizable compounds (C).

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2. A water-soluble or water-dispersible copolymer as claimed in
 claim 1, wherein the free-radical polymerization is an
 emulsion polymerization.

35 3. A water-soluble or water-dispersible copolymer as claimed in
 either of claims 1 or 2, wherein hydroxyethyl methacrylate is
 employed as hydroxy-C₁-C₆-alkyl (meth)acrylate.

4. A water-soluble or water-dispersible copolymer as claimed in
 40 any of claims 1 to 3, wherein the compounds of the formula
 (A) are selected from the group of methyl methacrylate,
 methyl acrylate, methyl acrylate, or mixtures thereof.

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5. A water-soluble or water-dispersible copolymer as claimed in any of claims 1 or 4, wherein the compounds of the formula (B) are selected from the group of C₃-C₂₄ vinyl esters.
- 5 6. A process for preparing water-soluble or water-dispersible copolymers as claimed in any of claims 1 to 5 by free-radical polymerization in an aqueous or nonaqueous but water-miscible solvent or in mixed nonaqueous/aqueous solvents.
- 10 7. A process as claimed in claim 6, wherein the polymerization takes place in the presence of from 30 to 55% by weight of polyvinyl alcohol.
8. A pharmaceutical dosage form comprising at least one water-soluble or water-dispersible copolymer as claimed in
15 any of claims 1 to 5 as coating agent, binder and/or film-forming excipient.
9. The use of water-soluble or water-dispersible copolymers as
20 claimed in any of claims 1 to 5 as coating agent, binder and/or film/forming excipient in pharmaceutical dosage forms.

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